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Mann, Erika

o.O., 1962-02-10

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February 10, 1962

Mr. L. Arnold Weissberger
Weissberger and Frosch
Counselors at Law
120 East 56th Street
New York 22, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Weissberger, -

will you kindly excuse this very tardy reply to the various letters you addressed to my mother. An uncommon series of minor misfortunes has caused all that delay. As you know, my mother has been travelling, whereas I have been here in Vienna undergoing a rather strenuous cure. And since I am authorized once and for all to deal with all matters concerning our stage-, film- and TV-properties, it came about that your interesting suggestions remained unanswered for such a prolonged period of time.

Of course, you are quite right in your letter of January 5th and our motion picture contract concerning THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN does not in any way touch on our stage rights with regard to said property. All that my mother meant, when she said "the company would be opposed to a dramatization prior to the picture" was merely that any failure on Broadway could do immeasurable harm to the proposed film and that consequently, we should have to know precisely what Mr. Selznick's plans are. In our opinion and owing to a great deal of work which has for years been done on the screenplay, "THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN", though particularly promising and attractive in many ways, confronts the writer of the screenplay with a number of peculiar difficulties which are very hard to solve, unless one were ready to sacrifice much of the book and to present mainly the fascinating milieu, the beautiful roles and parts of both the tragedy and the irony of it all. However, compared with the problems facing the author of a screenplay, the intricacies certain to bewitch the dramatist would appear to be gigantic. There is much in the very medium of the film which would help to make a moving picture out of the novel. Generally speaking, my father has always said that the film had far more of the epic than it had of the drama. I cannot but agree with him.

On the other hand, I need hardly say that the very name of David O. Selznick offers a high guarantee and conveys confidence.

Even so, you'll readily understand that - apart from and prior to, any financial considerations - we'd have to know just exactly what is being planned. Should a raw version of the play be in existence even now, I'd be most grateful for an opportunity to read it at the earliest possible moment. Should no such version exist as yet, there surely must be some sort of outline or scenario which would give me a rough idea of how Mr. Selznick intends to approach the thing.

As soon as matters have progressed a little further in the direction outlined above, I shall be very glad to get you in touch with the motion picture company involved so that - should both parties be interested - forces maybe joined in the end.

With all good wishes and my renewed apology for keeping you waiting,

yours sincerely,

ERIKA MANN

PS. I am about to return to Kilchberg and may be reached there until further notice.



20/11/51